

OUR SUNDAY CELEBRATION

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD / B

25 DECEMBER 2023

INTRODUCTORY RITES

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

see back page for respective Mass

GREETING

P. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

P. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

R. And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

P. Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

P. Lord Jesus, you are mighty God and Prince of Peace: Lord have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

P. You are the Son of God and the Son of Mary: Christ have mercy.

R. Christ, have mercy.

P. You are the Word made Flesh, the splendour of the Father: Lord have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

P. May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest, / and on earth peace to people of good will. / We praise you, / we bless you, / we adore you, / we glorify you, / we give you thanks for your great glory, / Lord God, heavenly King, / O God, almighty Father, / Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, / Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, / you take away the sins of the world, / have mercy on us; / you take away the sins of the world, / receive our prayer; / you are seated at the right hand of the Father, / have mercy on us. / For you alone are the Holy One, / you alone are the Lord, / you alone are the Most High, / Jesus Christ, / with the Holy Spirit, / in the glory of God the Father. / Amen.

COLLECT *see back page for respective Mass*

LITURGY OF THE WORD

see back page for respective Mass

PROFESSION OF FAITH APOSTLES' CREED
Or the Nicene Creed may be said.

I believe in God, / the Father almighty, /



Creator of heaven and earth, / and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, / who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, / born of the Virgin Mary, / suffered under Pontius Pilate, / was crucified, died and was buried; / he descended into hell; / on the third day he rose again from the dead; / he ascended into heaven, / and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; / from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. / I believe in the Holy Spirit, / the holy catholic Church, / the communion of saints, / the forgiveness of sins, / the resurrection of the body, / and life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS:

see back page for respective Mass

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. Lift up your hearts.

R. We lift them up to the Lord.

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R. It is right and just.

PREFACE I, II OR III OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

After the Preface, we sing or say:

All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

THE MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

P. The mystery of faith.

All: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free.

COMMUNION RITE

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P. Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

R. Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

see back page for respective Mass

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

see back page for respective Mass

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

SOLEMN BLESSING

P. May the God of infinite goodness, who by the Incarnation of his Son has driven darkness from the world and by that glorious Birth has illumined this most holy night (day), drive far from you the darkness of vice and illumine your hearts with the light of virtue.

R. Amen.

P. May God, who willed that the great joy of his Son's saving Birth be announced to shepherds by the Angel, fill your minds with the gladness he gives and make you heralds of his Gospel.

R. Amen.

P. And may God, who by the Incarnation brought together the earthly and heavenly realm, fill you with the gift of his peace and favour and make you sharers with the Church in heaven.

R. Amen.

P. And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

R. Amen.

P. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

R. Thanks be to God.

ST MARTHA'S PARISH STRATHFIELD

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A MESSAGE FROM FR JOHN

Dear Parishioners, Families and Friends,

On this beautiful Christmas day, surrounded by our loved ones, let us remember the true meaning of Christmas. God gave His greatest gift to us on that first Christmas Day and may the wonder of it always guide and light your way. 'Tis the season for giving, charity, respect for all God's creation, and bringing peace to our Earth. May the Christmas season fill your home with joy, your heart with love, and your life with laughter. And may God bless you today and every day.

Thank you for all your support throughout this past year; and we especially thanks all the volunteers in our parish community, we are very grateful for your invaluable service, time and commitment, and St Martha's would not be able to function without your assistance. To our Acolytes, Altar Servers, Catechists, Children's Liturgy, Choir, Cleaners, Counters, Musicians, Readers, Sacristans, Safeguarding Officers, Special Ministers, Staff, Teachers & Wardens. May God shower you with abundant blessings this Christmas. We wish you all the Peace, Love, Hope and Joy that only the Infant Jesus can give you on this blessed feast of Christmas. May His light shine brightly during this Christmas season and always, as we reflect on the true message of Christmas.

We hope that you have a Happy, Blessed & Safe Christmas season with loved ones and friends. God Bless, Fr John Hayes.



TODAY IS BORN OUR SAVIOUR, CHRIST THE LORD!

Christmas Offering Envelopes are available at the Church Entrances.

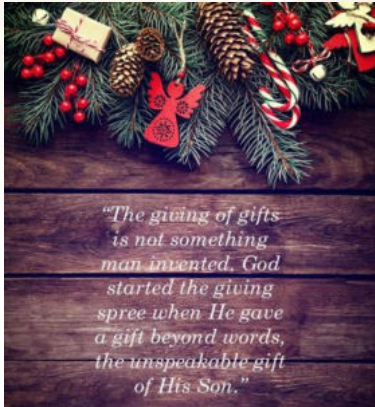
Thank you to everyone that helped & contributed to our Christmas celebrations.

Thank you for all the lovely cards & gifts ... Fr John & Fr Liem

Christmas Offering Envelopes are now Available at the Church Entrances

BOXING DAY MASS ON TUESDAY 26TH DECEMBER WILL BE CELEBRATED AT 9.10AM.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE NO 7.30AM MASS.



May the wonder of that first Christmas, the joy of God's abundant blessings, and the peace of Jesus's presence be with you always. May the true spirit of Christmas shine in your heart and light your path and may God's blessings be yours. Wishing you and your loved ones a happy, safe & blessed Christmas.

We share the joy of the angels and the shepherds as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Saviour of the world. He is one with us, in times of darkness and hardship, in joy and celebration. We acknowledge those members of our Parish Community that have lost loved ones during 2023. May the Birth of Jesus give you comfort and strength during this Christmas Period.

Background on the Gospel Reading (Loyola Press). There are four Masses that are celebrated for the Feast of Christmas and each is given its own set of readings to help us contemplate Christ's birth. The Gospel for the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve is taken from the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew. The Mass at midnight proclaims the birth of Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. The Mass at dawn on Christmas morning continues the story of the birth of Jesus as found in Luke's Gospel, ending with the shepherds' visit to the infant Jesus. In each of these Gospel readings, we hear portions of the infancy narratives with which we are familiar. The Gospel for the Christmas Mass during the day is taken from the beginning of John's Gospel, but this part of John's Gospel is not an infancy narrative like those found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Instead, John's Gospel starts at the very beginning and presents the Creation story as the framework for announcing the Incarnation. John's opening words echo the first verse in the Book of Genesis. This framework invites us to view Jesus' birth from God's perspective. Each of the Gospels makes clear that Jesus' birth was the result of God's initiative. John's Gospel, however, emphasizes that Jesus' birth was the divine intention from the moment of Creation. As we observe in today's reading, the Gospel of John includes highly philosophical and theological language. One example that particularly stands out in this Gospel is John's repeated references to "the Word" in the opening verse. This expression (logos in the Greek) borrows from a concept found in both Jewish and Greek thought. Jews used this phrase to describe God's action in the Creation story, for example, and in the Wisdom literature. In Greek thought, the logos were understood as an intermediary between God and humanity. John and others in the early Church adopted this language to describe God's incarnation in Jesus. As the term was used to express the Trinitarian faith of Christians, the Word came to be equated with the Second Person of the Trinity. In this prologue to the Gospel of John, we also hear the main themes that will be developed in his Gospel. These are often presented as dualities: light and dark, truth and falsehood, life and death, and belief and unbelief. We also hear in this prologue a unique aspect of John's Gospel, the theme of testimony. John the Baptist was sent by God to testify to Jesus, the light. Others in this Gospel will also offer testimony about Jesus. The reader is invited to accept this testimony, which bears witnesses to Jesus, the Son of God. But even more directly, Jesus' action and words will testify to Jesus' identity as God's Incarnate Word. Thinking about Jesus' birth in these theological and cosmological terms is particularly appropriate as we celebrate the Feast of Christmas in the darkness of winter. At this time, nature itself seems to remind us of the darkness of sin. Into this darkness, in the midst of our sinfulness, God comes to dwell among us. John's Gospel reminds us that through the Incarnation, God saves us from the darkness of sin and makes us his children.

Reflection for Christmas Day

The Birth of Jesus Christ, our Saviour – Christ the Light and the Light of Christ by Michael Moore OMI

The shopping is done, all the presents are bought and wrapped, the house is clean and the tree with all its decoration is shining brightly. So what has all this hectic busyness been about? When we have a birthday in our own family, what do we do? We gather around the person whose birthday it is and as a family, then we do two things. We remember and we celebrate. We remember the time and date the person was born. We look back and remember the day they came in to our family. We might look at photographs of them and recall how they looked when they were young. We tell stories about them when they were young; we remember their first words, the first days at a school and other significant events in their early life. Then we celebrate with them. We give thanks and celebrate the difference they have made and continue to make to our family. This is exactly what we on Christmas Day; we remember and we celebrate. We recall and tell the story of how and when Jesus was born. We tell the story of Mary and Joseph being turned away from the inn, we remember that the angels appeared with good news and we remember how shepherds and the kings visited the stable. Then we celebrate the difference Jesus has made not only to the world, but to our personal lives. We have to be careful that we don't look at Christmas as if it were just a historical event that happened in the past. The birth of Jesus is an event that echoes and ripples through the centuries right down to us today. We are asked not to experience Christmas and the birthday of Christ as a nice romantic thing as is often depicted on Christmas cards. Through the birth of Christ, God enters our time and history, and more importantly each of our own personal lives. Christ is Emmanuel, God-is-with-us, and God is with each of us today in a very personal and intimate way. As pope, John Paul II, wrote, 'the mystery of the birth of Jesus that took place over 2000 years ago must be lived today and every day. The Word that found a dwelling place in and through Mary comes to knock on our hearts this Christmas and every Christmas, today and every day. This Christmas, while all the celebrations and festivities are taking place, let's stop, take some time and ask ourselves, what am I remembering? What am I celebrating? May the Light of Christ and Christ the Light bless our world and fill all our homes and families, this Christmas Day and always. Amen.

Christmas Prayers

Lord, in this holy season of prayer and song and laughter, we praise you for the great wonders you have sent us: for shining star and angel's song, for infant's cry in lowly manger. We praise you for the Word made flesh in a little Child. We behold his glory, and are bathed in its radiance. Amen.

Lord of All, we give you thanks for your abundance, and for all the great things you have given us, especially the birth of Your Son on this day. We ask your blessing upon this food, and upon our friends and family. We also pray that in your great mercy, you would look kindly upon all those in need this day. Amen.



VIGIL MASS

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON Cf. Ex 16:6-7

Today you will know that the Lord will come, and he will save us, and in the morning you will see his glory.

Greeting, Penitential Act, Gloria –
see front page

COLLECT

O God, who gladden us year by year as we wait in hope for our redemption, grant that, just as we joyfully welcome your Only Begotten Son as our Redeemer, we may also merit to face him confidently when he comes again as our Judge. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING Isaiah 62:1-5

RESP PSALM Ps 88: 4-5, 16-17, 27, 29

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

SECOND READING Acts 13: 16-17, 22-25

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia Alleluia!

Tomorrow the wickedness of the earth will be destroyed:

The Saviour of the word will be our king.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 1:1-25 (or 1:18-25)

Profession of Faith – *see front page*

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we look forward, O Lord, to the coming festivities, may we serve you all the more eagerly for knowing that in them you make manifest the beginnings of our redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON Cf. Isa 40:5

The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see the salvation of our God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, O Lord, we pray, that we may draw new vigour from celebrating the Nativity of your Only Begotten Son, by whose heavenly mystery we receive both food and drink. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Solemn Blessing – *see front page*

MASS DURING THE NIGHT

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON Ps 2:7

The Lord said to me: You are my Son. It is I who have begotten you this day.

or

Let us all rejoice in the Lord, for our Saviour has been born in the world. Today true peace has come down to us from heaven.

Greeting, Penitential Act, Gloria –
see front page

COLLECT

O God, who have made this most sacred night radiant with the splendour of the true light, grant, we pray, that we, who have known the mysteries of his light on earth, may also delight in his gladness in heaven. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING Isaiah 9:1-7

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 95: 1-3, 11-13

R. Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

SECOND READING Titus 2:11-14

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Lk 2:10-11

Alleluia Alleluia!

Good news and great joy to all the world: Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Luke 2:1-14

Profession of Faith – *see front page*

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May the oblation of this day's feast be pleasing to you, O Lord, we pray, that through this most holy exchange we may be found in the likeness of Christ, in whom our nature is united to you. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON Jn 1:14

The Word became flesh, and we have seen his glory.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God, that we, who are gladdened by participation in the feast of our Redeemer's Nativity, may through an honourable way of life become worthy of union with him. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Solemn Blessing – *see front page*

MASS DURING THE DAY

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON Isa 9:5

A child is born for us, and a son is given to us; his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Messenger of great counsel.

Greeting, Penitential Act, Gloria –
see front page

COLLECT

O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and still more wonderfully restored it, grant, we pray, that we may share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING Isaiah 52:7-10

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 97:1-6

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

SECOND READING Hebrews 1:1-6

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia Alleluia!

A holy day has dawned upon us.

Come you nations and adore the Lord.

Today a great light has come upon the earth

Alleluia!

GOSPEL John 1:1-18

Profession of Faith – *see front page*

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Make acceptable, O Lord, our oblation on this solemn day, when you manifested the reconciliation that makes us wholly pleasing in your sight and inaugurated for us the fullness of divine worship. Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON cf. Ps 97:3

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, O merciful God, that, just as the Saviour of the world, born this day, is the author of divine generation for us, so he may be the giver even of immortality. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Solemn Blessing – *see front page*

A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL

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CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO YOU ALL.

MAY THE BIRTH OF THE SAVIOUR
BRING YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES
HOPE, PEACE AND JOY.